

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 05634 171320Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PORS, ELAB, BL

SUBJECT: GOB DISCUSSIONS WITH MINEWORKER'S REPRESENTATIVES
BEGIN

REF: LA PAZ 5472 AND PREVIOUS

1. GOB OFFICIALS, LED BY THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR, LABOR AND MINING INAUGURATED JULY 14 A NATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH OVER 100 MINEWORKER'S REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS SOLUTIONS TO THE MINERS' ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEMANDS. PRESIDENT BANZER SPOKE TO THE ASSEMBLED GROUP AND SAID THAT THEIR DEMANDS ARE JUST AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS DISPOSED TO FAVORABLY ATTEND TO THE NEEDS OF THE MINEWORKERS, ASKING IN RETURN UNDERSTANDING, SINCERITY, A SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE AND A TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OF THE ECONOMIC POSSIBILITIES OF COMIBOL, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED MINING CORPORATION. SESSIONS LASTING THROUGH JULY 19 ARE PLANNED WITH THE "COMITES DE BASE" OF THE MINEWORKERS, TO INCLUDE SESSIONS ON BOLIVIA'S OVERALL ECONOMY, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE MINES, GOVERNMENT WELFARE PROGRAMS, AND COMIBOL'S ECONOMIC SITUATION.

2. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE CONFERENCE IS THE GOB'S NEXT STEP

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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 05634 171320Z

TOWARD RESTRUCTURING THE LABOR SITUATION IN THE MINES FOLLOW-

ING THE REMOVAL BY EXILE OR IMPRISONMENT OF THE ORIGINAL NATIONAL MINEWORKERS' FEDERATION (FSTMB) LEADERS. THE GOB IS OBVIOUSLY DISPOSED TO GRANT WAGE INCREASES IN THE 30 PCT RANGE, AS WELL AS TO MAKE SOME EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS, BUT IT IS CLEARLY UNWILLING TO MEET THE ASTRONOMIC DEMANDS FOR WAGE AND WELFARE INCREASES WHICH EMANATED FROM THE MAY CONGRESS OF THE NOW DEFUNCT FSTMB. HOW REPRESENTATIVE THE COMITES DE BASE ARE AND WHETHER THEIR INTERMEDIATION WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE MINEWORKERS REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT WITH THE FSTMB LEADERSHIP GONE AND THE MILITARY CONTINUING TO OCCUPY THE MINES THE MINERS PROBABLY HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT WHAT THE GOB IS WILLING TO GIVE. THERE MAY STILL BE SOME ADVERSE REACTION FROM ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS IN THE MINES, REGARDLESS OF THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE.

STEDMAN

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